

THE
PRINCE of ANGOLA,
A TRAGEDY,
ALTERED FROM THE
PLAY OF OROONOKO.

AND
Adapted to the CIRCUMSTANCES
OF THE
PRESENT TIMES.



I have heard
That guilty Creatures, fitting at a Play,
Have, by the very Cunning of the Scene,
Been Struck so to the Soul, that presently
They have proclaim'd their Malefactions.

SHAKESPEARE.

MANCHESTER: PRINTED BY J. HARROP.
M,DCC,LXXVIII.

Price One Shilling and Six-pence.

THE
PRINCE of ANGOLA

A TRAGEDY

ALTERED FROM THE

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AND

Adapted to the CIRCUMSTANCES

P R E S E N T E D
BY THE
BRITISH MUSEUM



I have heard
That guilty Creatures, sitting at a Play,
Have, by the very Cunning of the Scene,
Been struck to the Soul, that presently
They have professed their Malice.
SHAKESPEARE

MANCHESTER: PRINTED BY J. HARRIS.

1833.

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P R E F A C E.

THE Reader may possibly apprehend, from the space which I foresee this Preface will occupy, that his judgment is about to be deluded by Artifice, or scared by Declamation, to approve a Composition, which even the Author distrusts, or to pardon Errors which pierce the most splendid Disguise of heroic Verse. But Examples have proved sufficiently that Verse cannot always be defended by Prose, and a Writer can no longer support the Credit of his Works by Versatile and partial Criticism; the object of this attempt is not Fame, and the history of it's motives would be very short, but for its connexion with a subject, on which it is impossible to think long with indifference.

When the attempt to abolish the African Slave Trade commenced in *Manchester*, some active friends of the cause imagined, that by assembling a few of the principal topics, in a dramatic form, an impression might be made, on persons negligent of simple reasoning. The magnitude of a crime, by dispersing our perceptions, sometimes leaves nothing in the mind but a cold sense of disapprobation. We talk of the destruction of millions, with as little emotion, and as little accuracy of comprehension, as of the distances of the Planets.* But when those who hear with Serenity, of depopulated Coasts, and exhausted Nations, are led by tales of domestic misery, to the sources of public evil, their feelings act with not less violence for being kindled by a single spark. When they are told of the pangs of an innocent creature, forced to a foreign country; in want of every thing; and in subjection to an imperious stranger; of the anguish caused by violated ties, and uncheck'd brutality; of the mother fainting under her task, and unable to supply her neglected infant; of the aged abandon'd to want; and the sick compelled to exertion, by the lash; nature will rise up within them, and own her relation to the sufferers.

The Story of OROONOKO appear'd particularly adapted to this purpose, by its authenticity, as well as its pathetic incidents. To supply the reflexions, naturally arising in its progress, and to furnish sentiments, which, however characteristic, had escaped the dramatic attempts of Southern and Hawkesworth, has been my task. How it is executed, I am yet to learn.

In

* See this Point well illustrated in the *Adventurer*.

In pursuing this design, I have chiefly employed Dr. Hawkesworth's altered edition of *Oroonoko*, published in 1775; the merit of which consists, in rejecting the absurd, and insufferable under-plot of the Old Play. Hawkesworth professes, in the Prologue, to have viewed the tragic Portion with reverence; and the Specimens of Poetical Talent which he has offered, in one or two scenes, excuse him fully, for attempting so little on the Text of his Author.

The consideration necessary to my intentions, soon convinced me, that the Play required many material changes, besides the general turn of reflexion, originally projected. Although the incidents appeared even to invite sentiments adverse to slavery, yet Southern, not contented with refusing them, delivered by the medium of his Hero, a grovelling apology for slave-holders, which Hawkesworth has retained; and an illiberal contempt of the unhappy Negroes is so entwined with the fabric of the Piece, that it was impossible to separate it, without making large encroachments on the Author's design.

That Southern meant nothing more than to produce a mixed Play, capable of delighting the gross and depraved audience of that time, is sufficiently probable; it is certain, that if he suspected his plot, of any tendency to create a horror of slavery, he took effectual methods to correct it. The wretched scenes of his under-plot, engaged so much of his attention, that an extreme negligence, in some essential parts of the principal story, is discoverable. Thus, Aboan excites an insurrection among the slaves, almost immediately on his landing; and Hotman is introduced to notice, with such unequivocal marks of cowardice and folly, as to prove Aboan a shallow dupe, when he admits him to his confidence. Nor is the conspiracy better conducted, when the Prince himself appears in it: he leads off the slaves without any premeditated design, and has no practicable scheme to propose, for their deliverance. It is impossible to read, without a smile, these strokes of theatrical Generalship.

If you object the mountains, rivers, woods,
Unpassable, that lie before our march;
 Woods we can set on fire: we swim by Nature. Act III.

The proposal to *set the woods on fire*, is more ludicrous, to a modern reader, because a Prime Minister of this country, is said to hav

have expressed his wonder, that this *easy* precaution should have been neglected, by the unfortunate General Braddock. Oroonoko appears, in the course of this scene, to be equally great as a politician;

Therefore I still propose to lead our march
Down to the sea, and plant a colony;
'Till stress of weather, or *some accident*
Provide a ship for us.

Without insisting on the absurdity, of this familiar talk, of *planting a colony*, under the eyes of a force, superior in arms and discipline; here is the leader of an insurrection, avowing that he trusts to *some accident* for the execution of his purposes. (A)

But the principal blemish, in the conduct of the Old Play, consists in the total cessation of interest and anxiety, for the principal persons, before the winding up of the catastrophe. After the characters have made their exits, and their entrances, in a manner not very intelligible, the spectator is fully convinced, towards the middle of the fifth act, that Oroonoko and his Princess must die, to avoid sufferings more terrible than death. We are prepared to expect their fate, by the interview with Aboan, which, with the exception of a single thought, deserves the warmest praise, and never fails to excite the strongest feeling. We now desire, only that the unhappy pair may be 'quietly inurn'd': The dagger is brandished in our faces; "*the grave doth gape, and ghastly death is near*;" but expectation is dallied with, 'till its fervour is entirely abated, in nearly six pages of tedious declamation, that the dagger may clatter on the boards, and that Oroonoko may wrap himself in his robe, by rolling about the Stage.

The Author's inaccuracy is still more glaring, in the unfinish'd state of the characters: perhaps it would not be too bold to assert, that there is not one respectable character, in Southern's Play. Oroonoko is certainly the Hero of the piece, yet the Author contrives to degrade him irretrievably, in his first interview with Aboan.† When Aboan sets before him, the miseries of slavery, when he displays the scheme of deliverance, when he conjures him

(A) These Passages, which Southern copied, with injudicious fidelity from Mrs. Behn's Novel, must rank with the story she relates of a large Tiger, killed by Oroonoko, near Surinam, which was found to have seven musket balls in the heart. The shots, she takes care to add, were made a long time before the death of the animal, and the wounds were very neatly seam'd up!

him by every motive of personal feeling, and public spirit, to free his unhappy countrymen; mark the reply of this, "Something greater sure, than Cæsar ever was;"§

I do not tamely say, that we should bear
All they could lay upon us: but we find
The load so light, so little to be felt,
(Considering they have us in their power,
And may inflict what grievances they please)
We ought not to complain.

Act III.

And when Aboan reminds him of the danger of ill-treatment to which he is exposed; he answers,

You see how little cause I have to think so;
Favour'd in my own person, in my friends;
Indulg'd in all that can concern my care,
In my Imoinda's soft society.

It was not only weak, but unjust in Southern thus to debase his principal character. The rest fare little better; Aboan is the dupe of a weak man; Blandford submits to the Governor's perfidy with infamous tameness; Imoinda and Stanmore have no character at all.

Southern had, unfortunately, adopted the fashionable ideas of his age, which led him into perpetual violations of decorum, and of good sense. He painted Oroonoko after the *men of the town*; he is therefore rendered contemptible. It was this turn of reflexion that made Southern forgetful, in the meeting of Oroonoko and Imoinda, of one of the strongest feelings incident to their situation. A Prince who loses a wife whom he loves, who finds her in slavery, and who is himself become a slave, could not long neglect to advert to this dreadful change of circumstances: But Southern's Oroonoko deliberately thanks the wretch who enslaved him, for restoring him to his Imoinda.

This vitiated taste pushed Southern to the very extreme of dramatic extravagance. The Swagger of his hero, and the Whine of his lover are far remote from propriety and even from probability. Where he suffered himself to write naturally, he displays much knowledge of the heart, and strong powers of affecting the Passions, as in Oroonoko's first appearance, and in the two principal scenes

§ Old Play, Act II.

scenes with Aboan; but more than one of these is disgraced by a burst of unnatural and risible bombast. Such is Oroonoko's preface to his history:

Thou God ador'd! thou ever-glorious Sun!

[kneeling and kissing the earth]

If she be yet on earth, send me a beam

Of thy all-seeing power to light me to her:

Or if thy Sister-goddes has preferr'd

Her beauty to the skies, to be a star,

O tell me where she shines, that I may stand

Whole nights, and gaze upon her!

Critics have long complained that Poets will needs convert Turks, Tartars, Africans and Indians, into learned Mythologists: How Oroonoko came to believe the doctrine of the Apotheosis, will not be easily understood, by those who know, that an African's highest religious mystery is the Mumbo Jumbo.

But the most furious folly occurs in that scene where Aboan engages his Prince in the conspiracy, by presenting the horrible prospect of an enslaved progeny: We expect to discover every feeling of a Prince and a warrior, convulsed by this execrating idea; we look for all the agitations of Ariosto's hero, in that beautiful and surpassing imitation,

Or quinci, or quindi il volta, or lo rassume,

Tutto in un luoco, e non lo ferma mai.

Qual d'acqua chiara il tremolante lume,

Dal Sol percossa, ò da notturni rai,

Per gli ampli tetti va con lungo salto,

A destra, and a sinistra, a basso ed alto.*

Orland Furios. C. 8. S. 71.

But Southern's angry man, with high disdain of every natural emotion, springs off with an unexpected metaphor, and only returns to think of himself in the middle of his declamation; we lose sight of decency, when he bellows forth,

Ha!

* Atque animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc,

In partesque rapit varias, perque omnia versat.

Sicut aquæ tremulum labris ubi lumen alienis

Sole repercussum, aut radiantis imagine Lunæ,

Omnia pervolat late loca; jamque sub auras

Erigitur, summique ferit laquearia tecti.

VIRG. ÆN. VIII. V. 20.

Ha! thou hast rous'd
The lion in his den, he stalks abroad,
And the wide forest trembles at his roar.

We naturally apply Old Falstaff's adjuration, to this alarming blusterer; *Prithce speak a little like a man of this world.*

After Oroonoko has been deceived, chained, and imprison'd, he still speaks the insipid language of romance, without making any rational reflexions on his condition;

To honour bound! and yet a slave to love!
I am distracted by their rival powers,
And both will be obey'd

Love, love will be
My first ambition, and my fame the next.

It is not easy to discover what sort of fame a person in his situation is entitled to expect. But this word fame, like my Lord Peter's loaf, is the quintessence of all motives with our Author; for in the fifth act, Blandford gravely asks the Lieutenant Governor of Surinam, whether he has no reverence of FUTURE FAME!

I pass many disgusting extravagances of the same kind, particularly in the last scene; (Aboan's dying pun, and Oroonoko's declamatory wishes, to be swallowed up, to be melted, and to be drowned) to observe only two pieces of indecorum, which are, separately, sufficient to indicate the necessity of thoroughly reforming the Play. The first occurs, when Imoinda begs in despair, to die by her husband's hands;

Imo. Is this the way to part?

Oro. Which is the way?

Imo. The god of love is blind, and cannot find it.

The other is introduced at the close of the Play, when the work of blood is just concluded; when the Spectator is still agitated by the view of a triple murder committed by Oroonoko; then does Captain Stanmore inform us, that

He has kill'd the Governor, and stabb'd himself!

I am astonished to find this absurdity, after being retrench'd
by

by the players, restored in the edition published in the name of Dr. Hawkefworth. The Alterations made in that edition appear to me, in general, so injudicious, that I have thrown them out. It would be an abuse of the reader's patience to enter into a particular account of them, after so copious an examination of the Old Play: a few lines given to Imoinda, and the opening of one scene, the only passages of merit in the altered edition, are preserved; probably the reader will not regret any of the expung'd scenes, unless he shall find that I have written worse.

Let not these remarks be thought to partake too much of the severity of criticism; if the alterations ascribed to Dr. Hawkefworth were really made by him, they only prove that he was no Poet: to mistake our own Talents is easy; but the public is more judicious; and Dr. Hawkefworth's fame does not rest on Poetical merit.

Neither was it my intention, by the preceding observations on Southern, to depreciate the merits of the pleasant Bard,

— Whom Heav'n sent down, to raise,
The price of Prologues and of Plays.*

Indeed I have been kind, in comparison of Swift's humorous severity, in his verses on our Poet's birth-day, where he thus moralizes his dinner;

The mushrooms shew his wit was sudden,
And for his judgment—lo! a pudding!—

The objections which I have produced against the 'octogenarian' Poet, are only meant to defend the changes I have risked, which had no immediate connexion with my general design, and Southern's immorality would have made greater harshness pardonable. But the motives of this piece are not to be confounded with incidental criticism. I should scarce have ventured on a species of composition, in which I am unpractised, and for which, perhaps, my habits have ill-qualified me, but from the hope of serving a cause, to the success of which, I am desirous that no aid, however feeble, may be wanting. It is my wish that the reader should not consider these additions to the Play of Oroonoko, merely as a poetical effort, but that he should view the Tragedy thus alter'd, as designed to communicate and extend those impressions of the African

* Swift.

African Slave Trade, which are already received by so large a proportion of the people of England.

Si quisquam est, qui placere se studeat bonis,
Quam plurimis, et minime multos lædere;
In his Poeta nomen proficitur suum.

Tum si quis est, qui dictum in se INCLEMENTIUS
Existimavit esse, sic existimet,
RESPONSUM, non dictum esse.

TERENT. PROL. in EUN.

In a cause like the present, it is less necessary to reason than to describe; for when the facts are once presented, honest and uncorrupted natures can at once decide on their complexion. 'There needs no ghost come from the grave,' to determine between right and wrong, on evidence that makes the virtuous tremble, and that has long disgraced the cajoling Panegyrists of the *humanity* of the age.

The time is at last come, when the Praise of Humanity will no longer be an empty sound. Whatever may be the success of the present efforts, for terminating this disgraceful traffic, the sentiments of the People will still be inimical to the Tyranny and Oppression which it produces; they will still desire the relief of their unfortunate African brethren; and steadily desiring, they will in the end obtain it. They will exhibit to the philosopher and historian, a new and magnificent spectacle; that of a great people, extending, with unexampled liberality, the liberty which they have so dearly purchased, to the most injured, and most unresisting of the human race. This is a merit beyond all Greek and Roman praise; a merit which will endear the English name to posterity, and obliterate the disgrace of baffled armies, and divided empire.

I cannot, in this place, withhold my testimony of the alacrity, with which the cause of the unhappy Africans has been embraced, by the Inhabitants of Manchester. Their attention to the grievance, instantly excited their attempts to redress it; and their conduct has fully evinced the futility of that prejudice, entertained by men, (otherwise of authority far from despicable) who have not been ashamed to speak of "the unfeeling Spirit of Trade." At the same time, it would be unjust, to omit an acknowledgement of the Patronage, which the Sex has extended to this Cause. An ample, and almost unsolicited Subscription, furnished by them, has conveyed that approbation, which the shallowest witling dares not despise, and which every man of a right heart will be proud to obtain.

But

But however auspicious the general zeal, wherever this subject has been thoroughly examined, may appear; however flattering the approbation of those, compared with whom, knowledge seems trifling, and dignity unimportant;* and however encouraging the Patronage secur'd to this Cause, in the British Senate; the friends of the African must consider their task as but begun. For even should the justice of the Legislature provide the Redress we hope, in the speediest manner practicable, tho' the evils of the Africans would be diminished, by removing our share of the dreadful guilt, yet much oppression would continue to be exercised on them, by other European nations. It must therefore be the wish of every enemy to the Slave-trade, to promote the sentiments he adopts, among all the professors of Christianity.† Nothing less can be desired than a suppression of this systematic inhumanity, throughout Europe.

The most distant possibility of so desirable an event must excite activity, and the very commencement of exertion seems to bring its accomplishment within reach. Already, has the spirit of benevolence issued to neighbouring countries; already are exertions promised for suppressing the Slave Trade of France.

It would be more than cynical rigour, to check the wanderings of fancy, on so animating a prospect. No man, who is a friend to his species, can imagine with indifference, a time when commerce shall no longer serve to multiply the causes of political discord, and to extend the miseries of war; when the merchant shall resume his proper character, and cease to act as a plunderer and a pirate; when the religion, and the knowledge of Europe shall be imparted to Nations, yet struggling in darkness, or yet grovelling in ignorance; and when the impolicy of war shall be confessed, by generations more enlightened, and more fortunate than ourselves.

These speculations will seem least extravagant, to those who know the history of science and art. When Cicero jocularly enquired what philosophical systems prevailed in Britain, nothing could be more improbable, than that Britain should triumph over Roman knowledge, by the most splendid and unhop'd discoveries. On this occasion I have nothing to fear from the intelligent and good; and wretched indeed must be his Cause, who dreads the contempt of the ignorant and worthless.

St. James's Square, Manchester. ?
January the 6th, 1788. }

J. FERRIAR

* Milton. † See the Resolutions of the Manchester Society for procuring the final Abolition of the Slave Trade.

P R O L O G U E.

*WHEN Truth appears in Fiction's fav'rite Seat,
And bids with virtuous Rage your Bosoms beat;
Mean were the Art, howe'er in Numbers drest,
To bribe Applause by Flattery or Jest.*

*To-night, reviv'd, sad Oroonoko pleads,
For each poor African that toils and bleeds.
No stale poetic Tricks delude the Ear,
Nor fancy'd Woes beguile you of a Tear.
Alas! too just the faithful Records prove,
Of ruin'd Majesty, and injured Love.*

*But, lost in Southern's Dross, with clouded Ray,
Deform'd and rude, the Royal Image lay;
Nor much avail'd against the obdurate Ill,
Th' Advent'ers cautious Touch, and dubious Skill.
A Hand, tho' rude in Art, in Justice bold,
Now runs the Features in a chaster Mould;
And copying Nature, offers to your View,
A Son of Afric, generous, brave, and true.
Not idly fabled for a pleasing Strain,
Does manly Worth in sable Bosoms reign,
Their's is the fiery Soul, that ev'n betrays
Th' oppressor's Tongue to yield unwilling Praise.
Let Honour that dogmatic Scorn efface,
Which sinks to Brutes the persecuted Race:
O! spurn th' unworthy Thought with gen'rous Zeal——
Mind has no Colour——ev'ry Heart can feel.*

*Hear Misery cry from yon blood-water'd Lands;
Lo, suff'ring Crouds to you extend their Hands;
Those ghastly Seams unmeasur'd Lashes tore,
Those wasted Limbs the cleaving Fetters wore——
See mangled Victims fill th' Oppressor's Den,
And hear Compassion tell you——THESE ARE MEN.*

*Weak is the Trust in frugal Reason's Care;
Reason in vain bids yonder Tyrants spare:
By Custom steel'd, they sport with human Pain,
And vengeful Hurricanes descend in vain.*

Our

*Our better Hopes within this Circle * rest;
 Here Pity lives in ev'ry gentle Breast.
 Folly may scoff, or Avarice may hate,
 Since Beauty comes the Negroe's Advocate.
 Let others boast in Fashion's Pride to glow,
 To lure the Lover, or attract the Beau;
 You check Oppression's Lash, protect the Slave,
 And, first to charm, are still the first to save.*

* The Ladies of Manchester have distinguished themselves very honourably in this Cause.

THE PERSONS.

M E N.

OROONOKO.

ABOAN.

BLANDFORD.

LT. GOVERNOR.

STANMORE.

Capt. DRIVER.

HOTMAN.

1st SLAVE.

PLANTERS, SLAVES, &c.

W O M E N.

IMOINDA.

WOMAN.

PRINCE of ANGOLA.

A **C** **T** **I**

S **C** **E** **N** **E** **L**

Lieut. Gov. and Blandford.

L. Gov. **L** **E** **T** me see—How have the slaves gone at this sale? Why there's no resisting your fortune, Blandford; you draw all the Prizes.

Blan. I wish fortune would be kinder to me in an honest way: for neither custom nor necessity can reconcile me to this traffic of our fellow-creatures,

L. Gov. Spoke like a new comer, indeed! What, don't we buy them fairly?

Bland. But does the seller get them fairly, Sir? Don't tell me that you are not obliged to scrutinize his right to dispose of them. You know the waste of blood with which our annual recruits of these wretches are purchased: You know that by supporting the demand for them, you encourage the

A

worst

worst villainies that the heart of man can devise, and can you call this series of violence, treachery and murder by the exalted name of Commerce.

L. Gov. Why our sugar-canes sweeten all these bitter reflexions. One thing indeed I regret; every time a ship comes in, I must pay fifty or sixty pounds for a fellow who perhaps hangs or starves himself in the course of the first month, or at best cannot be brought to hard labour under two or three years, tho' I should slay him alive. But allowing all that you say, What can we do? we must have slaves.

Bland. Do? Give them proper food and sufficient cloaths; destroy your instruments of torture; abridge your overseers of the pleasure of flogging: Let your slaves marry and be as happy as they can. Where did you purchase the right of making them miserable?

L. Gov. Where did you pick up these notions, Blandford? I should as soon look for consistency in a statesman, or independence in an exciseman, as for mercy in a planter—If you persist in this way of talking, you will be stuck up to every man's reproach, and barbecu'd with the wit of a whole Colony.

Blan. But if by mild treatment I can preserve my negroes without a fresh importation, my conduct may happen to appear less ridiculous than you imagine.

L. Gov. Yes, you will have the consolation of seeing a black fry devour your rice and yams; wretches, whom even the whip cannot bring to work till they are six years old; there's nothing to be got out of their bones; while in half the time, I can work a stout fellow of three and twenty off
his

his legs, and pay myself for his purchase. You are too squeamish indeed, Blandford, and I think luckier in your prizes than you deserve.—

Blan. Of the first you have not yet convinced me; as to the other, I draw for our Lord Governor, you know; his fortune favours me.

L. Gov. I grudge him nothing this time; but if fortune had favour'd me in the last sale, the fair slave had been mine.

Blan. That had been a fair lot for you—but not for Clemene, if I may trust the coyness she shews to your addressees.

L. Gov. I am ten times more a slave than she is—the more she despises me, I adore her more, and like myself less.

Enter Capt. Driver, teased and pulled about by several Planters, Men and Women.

Wom. Here have I six slaves in my lot, and not a man amongst them; all women and children; and one of the wenches keeps such a howling because her husband and child have gone in another lot, that I can't keep her quiet.

Capt. Give her a rope's end—You don't use to be sparing of your oakum.

Wom. What do you mean by that, you saucy Tarpaulin?

Capt. No offence; I only mean that you are one of my best customers; you give smarter floggings than any planter on this coast, and damn me if I don't respect you for it. You do trim the black devils, that I will say for you.

Wom. I am a lone woman, Captain, and must look sharp after my slaves: I have had a good many

deaths among them, but my estate is in better order for it.

Planter. Methinks, mistress, your estate would not have suffer'd, if you had spared the poor cook, whom you whipped into a fever 't'other day, because she under-seasoned one of your dishes.

Wom. You would not have said that, if I had asked you to dine—But, Captain, how came the men so huddled together in the lots? Here is a Prince, as they say, among the slaves, and you have set him down as a common man.

Capt. Why, what is he worth to me more than a common man? Will you pay me for giving him precedence?

Bland. Where are these slaves, Captain? I am curious to see this Prince whom I have drawn for the Governor: Who is he?

Capt. He's the devil of a fellow, I can tell you? a Prince every inch of him: You have paid dear enough for him, for all the good he'll do you: I was forc'd to clap him in irons, and did not think the ship safe neither. You are in hostility with the Indians; they say, they threaten you daily: You had best have an eye upon him.

Bland. But who is he?

Gov. And how do you know him to be a Prince?

Capt. He is son and heir to the great King of Angola, a mischievous monarch in those parts, who, by his good will, would never let any of his neighbours be in quiet. This son was his general; a plaguy fighting fellow. I have formerly dealt for slaves thereabouts, and have got pretty handsomely by them, but the wars being at an end, and nothing more to be got by the trade of that country, I made bold to bring the Prince along with me.

Gov.

Gov. How could you do that?

Bland. What! steal a Prince out of his own country! Impossible.

Capt. 'Twas hard indeed; but I did it. You must know this Oroonoko —

Bland. Is that his name?

Capt. Ay, Oroonoko.

Gov. Oroonoko.

Capt. Is naturally inquisitive about the Men and manners of the white nations. Because I could give him some account of the other parts of the world, I grew very much in his favour: In return for so great an honour, you know I could do no less, upon my coming away, than invite him on board me: Never having been in a ship, he appointed his time, and I prepared my entertainments; he came the next evening, as private as he could, with about some twenty along with him. The punch went round; and as many of his attendants as would be dangerous, I sent dead drunk on shore; the rest we secured; and so you have the prince Oroonoko.

1st Plan. Gad a mercy Captain; there you were with him, i'faith.

2d Plan. Such men as you are fit to be employed in public affairs: The plantation will thrive by you.

Capt. There's nothing done without it, boys, I have made my fortune this way.

Bland. Unheard of villainy! and they applaud him.

Gov. But, Captain, methinks you have taken a great deal of pains for this Prince Oroonoko; why did you part with him at the common rate of slaves?

Capt.

Gov.

Capt. Why, Lieutenant-governor, I'll tell you !
I did design to carry him to England, to have
shew'd him there ; but I found him troublesome
upon my hands, and am glad I'm rid of him —
Oh, oh, hark they come.

*Black Slaves, Men, Women, and Children, pass across
the Stage by two and two ; Aboan, and others of
Oroonoko's Attendants, two and two : Oroonoko
last of all, in Chains.*

Stann. Are all these wretches slaves.

Bland. All sold ; They and their Posterity all
slaves.

Capt. Now, Governor, pray observe him,

Oro. So, Sir, you have kept your word with me.

Capt. I am a better Christian, I thank you, than
to keep it with a heathen.

Oro. You are a Christian, be a Christian still ;

If you have any God that teaches you

To break your word, I need not curse you more ;

Let him cheat you, as you are false to me.

You faithful followers of my better fortune,

We have been fellow-soldiers in the field ;

[*Embracing his Friends.*

Now we are fellow-slaves. This last farewell.

Be sure of one thing that will comfort us,

Whatever world we are next thrown upon

Cannot be worse than this.

[*All slaves go off but Oroonoko.*

Capt. You see what a bloody Pagan he is, Gover-
nor ; but I took care that none of his followers
should be in the same lot with him, for fear they
should undertake some desperate action, to the
danger of the Colony.

Oro. Live still in fear ; it is the villain's curse,
And will revenge my chains : Fear even me,

Who

Who have no power to hurt thee—To the eye
Of trembling guilt, there's not a form so horrid
As the injur'd man—away—nature abhors,
And drives thee out from the society
And commerce of mankind, for breach of faith,
Men live and prosper but in mutual trust,
That thou hast violated. I have done;
I know my fortune, and submit to it.

Gov. Sir, I am sorry for your fortune, and would
help it if I could.

Blan. Take off his chains. You know your con-
dition; but you are fallen into honourable hands;
You are the Lord-Governor's Slave, who will use
you nobly: In his absence it shall be my care to
serve you.

[Blandford applying to him.

Oro. I hear you, but I can believe no more.

Gov. Captain, I'm afraid the world won't speak
so honourably of this action of yours, as you would
have 'em.

Capt. I have the money, let the world speak and
be damn'd; I care not.

Oro. I would forget myself. Be satisfied, [To Blan.
I am above the rank of common slaves.
Let that content you. The Christian there, that
knows me,
For his own sake will not discover more.

Capt. I have other Matters to mind, You
have him, and much good may do you with your
prince. [Exit.

The Planters pulling and staring at Oroonoko.

Blan. What would you have here? You stare as
if you never saw a man before. Stand farther off.

[Turns 'em away.

Oro.

Oro. Let 'em stare on.
 I am unfortunate, but not ashamed
 Of being so: No, let the guilty blush,
 The white man that betray'd me: Honest black
 Disdains to change its colour: I am ready;
 Where must I go? Dispose me as you please,
 I am not well acquainted with my fortune,
 And misery's first shock, with wild confusion
 Shakes even the firmest soul — by cruel proof.
 I now must learn that time makes all things easy.

Bland. All things shall be easy.

Oro. Tear off this pomp, and let me know
 myself:
 The slavish habit best becomes me now,
 Hard fare and whips, and chains may overpower
 The frailer flesh, and bow my body down:
 But there's another, nobler part of me,
 Out of your reach, which you can never tame.

Bland. You shall find nothing of this wretched-
 ness

You apprehend. We are not monsters all.
 You seem unwilling to disclose yourself:
 Therefore for fear the mentioning your name
 Should give you new disquiets, I presume
 To call you Cæsar.

Oro. I am myself; but call me what you please.

Gov. A very good name, Cæsar,
 And very fit for his character.

Oro. Was Cæsar then a slave?

Gov. I think he was; to Pirates too: He was a
 Great Conqueror, but unfortunate in his Friends —

Oro. His friends were Christians?

Bland. No.

Oro. No! that's somewhat strange.

Gov. And murder'd by 'em

Oro.

Oro. I would be *Cæsar* then. Yet I will live.

Blan. Live to be happier.

Oro. Do what you will with me.

Blan. I will attend, and serve you.

[Exit with Oroonoko.]

SCENE II.

A Grove, a Plantation seen at a little distance.

Abdian and Hotman.

Abd. Then you have groan'd in bonds, and felt
the whip,

And as you shriek'd, have heard your tyrants scoff,
And you have liv'd?

Hot. I have felt many a pang
More bitter than the mortal agony--

But when my wearied soul has loath'd this body,
And with a lover's longing call'd on death,
The means of death were barr'd me.

Abd. Who can bar
The wretch forlorn that seeks a friendly grave?
If jealous care remove the cord or knife;
If no kind hand supplies th' envenom'd cup;
Force cannot reach that sullen constancy,
Which spurns indignant the supports of life.
There ends constraint.

Hot. Alas! you little know
The artful snares of Christian tyranny.
How nicely drawn around the struggling wretch,
They check each effort when he springs at freedom.
If harass'd nature shuts out sustenance,
The fawning master brings (with bloody hands)
The sav'ry viands and the cheering bowl,

B

And

And offers gentle words, and forms his cheek
To long-forgotten smiles——Curse on the arts
That made me drag a loathsome being here,
For which I hate myself.

Abo. Sure you had done
Some crime that nature starts at, to compel
Such heavy vengeance from your judge's hands.---

Hot. Mine were the common crimes of this
dread prison,
Faintness and sorrow, or the sudden frown
Of a capricious mistress, ever apt,
In lux'ry's wayward fits, to force a tear
From those whose smile seems to insult her spleen.
O! what a change from Congo's golden plains,
Where time uncounted fled——for I was free——
And love was mine, and round these mangled
limbs

Where twines the lash, my little babes have clung—
But blasted now———[*weeps.*]

Abo. And dost thou only weep?
I could complain too—but I would have vengeance.
How many of our brethren, here oppress'd,
Would kindle at the cry, Freedom and Vengeance!

Hot. What could we do?

Abo. Assert our native right,
And measure force with those who own no title,
But force to hold us---we might find a way
To join the hostile Indians, whom our lords
With all their boasted engines fear to meet.

Hot. Were there but hope of that, we might
do something.

I know some honest men who would not pause
To risk a probable escape---will you
Stand forth as chief?

Abo.

Abo. One may be found, whose arm —
 And yet I know not---but of this be sure
 I face the danger with a heart as firm
 As any of the band---shew me your friends-[*Exeunt.*]

A C T II.

Enter Oroonoko and Blandford.

Oro. **Y**OU grant I have good reason to suspect
 All the professions you can make to me.

Bland. Indeed you have.

Oro. The dog that sold me did profess as much
 As you can do---but yet, I know not why---
 Whether it is because I'm fall'n so low,
 And have no more to fear---that is not it:
 I am a slave no longer than I please.
 'Tis something nobler---being just myself,
 I am inclining to think others so:
 'Tis that prevails upon me to believe you.

Bland. You may believe me.

Oro. I do believe you.
 Why should a wretch like me be flatter'd? or
 Had flattery place, the wise will act with honour;
 Cunning is the fool's virtue.
 You know my story, and you say you are
 A friend to my misfortunes: That's a name
 Will teach you what you owe yourself and me.

Blan. I'll study to deserve to be your friend.
 When once our noble Governor arrives,
 With him you will not need my interest:
 He is too generous not to feel your wrongs.

But be assur'd I will employ my pow'r,
And find the means to send you home again.

Oro. I thank you, Sir.——My honest, wretched friends! [Sighing.

Their chains are heavy: They have hardly found
So kind a master. May I ask you, Sir,
What is become of them: Perhaps I should not.
Pardon my Ignorance—

Blan. I will enquire,
And use my best endeavours, where they are,
To have 'em gently us'd.

Oro. Once more I thank you.
You offer every cordial that can keep
My hopes alive, to wait a better day.
What friendly care can do, you have apply'd.
But oh! I have a grief admits no cure.

Blan. You do not know, Sir——

Oro. Can you raise the dead?
Pursue and overtake the wings of time?
And bring about again the hours, the days,
The years that made me happy?

Blan. That is not to be done.

Oro. No, there is nothing to be done for me.
Abandon'd—solitary—doom'd to nurse
A hopeless sorrow with unceasing tears,
Yet doat on't.

Blan. I am rude, and interrupt you.

Oro. I am troublesome;
But pray give me your pardon. My swell'n heart
Bursts out its passage, and I must complain.
O! can you think of nothing dearer to me?
Dearer than liberty, my country, friends,
Much dearer than my life? That I have lost—
The tend'rest, best belov'd, and faithful wife.

Blan. Alas! I pity you.

Oro.

Oro. Do pity me:
Pity's a-kin to love; and every thought
Of that soft kind is welcome to my soul.
I would be pity'd here.

Blan. I dare not ask
More than you please to tell me: But, if you
Think it convenient to let me know
Your story, I dare promise you to bear
A part in your distress, if not assist you.

Oro. Thou honest-hearted man! I wanted such,
Just such a friend as thou art, that would sit
Still as the night, and let me talk whole days
Of *Imoinda*. O! I'll tell thee all
From first to last.

Blan. I will attend most heedfully.

Oro. There was a stranger in my father's court,
Valu'd and honour'd much: He was a white,
The first I ever saw of your complexion:
Of many virtues, and so fam'd in arms,
He still commanded all my father's wars.
I was bred under him. One fatal day,
The armies joining, he before me stepp'd,
Receiving in his breast a poison'd dart
Levell'd at me; he dy'd within my arms.
I've tir'd you already.

Blan. Pray go on.

Oro. He left an only daughter, whom he brought
An infant to *Angola*. When I came
Back to the court, a happy conqueror,
Humanity oblig'd me to condole
With this sad virgin for a father's loss,
Lost for my safety: I presented her
With all the spoils of battle to atone
Her father's ghost. But when I saw her face,
And heard her speak, I offer'd up myself

To

To be the sacrifice. She bow'd and blush'd ;
 I wonder'd and ador'd. The sacred power
 That had subdu'd me, then inspir'd my tongue,
 Inclined her heart, and all our talk was love.

Blan. Then you were happy.

Oro. O! I was most happy.

I marry'd her : And tho' my country's custom
 Indulg'd the privilege of many wives,
 I swore myself never to know but her.

She grew with child and I grew happier still.

O Imoinda ! But it could not last.

Her fatal Beauty reach'd my father's ears :

He sent for her to court, where, cursed court,

No woman comes, but for his am'rous use.

He raging to possess her, she was forc'd

To own herself my wife. The furious king

Started at incest : But grown desperate,

Not daring to enjoy what he desir'd,

In mad revenge, (which I could never learn)

He poison'd her, or sent her far, far off,

Far from my hopes ever to see her more.

Bland. Most barbarous of fathers ! the sad tale
 Breeds pity full of wonder.

Oro. I have done.

I'll trouble you no farther : Now and then

A sigh will have its way : That shall be all.

Enter Stanmore.

Stan. Blandford, the Lieutenant-governor is
 gone to your Plantation. He desires you will
 bring the Royal Slave along with you. The sight
 of his fair mistress, he says, is an entertainment
 for a prince, he would have his opinion of her.

Oro. Is he a lover.

Bland.

Bland. So he says: He flatters a beautiful slave that I have, and calls her mistress.

Oro. Must he then flatter her to call her mistress? I pity the proud man, who thinks himself Above being in love; What, tho' she be a slave, She may deserve him.

Bland. You shall judge of that, when you see her, Sir,

Oro. I go with you. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. A Plantation.

Lieutenant-governor following Imoinda.

Gov. I have disturb'd you, I confess my fault, My fair Clemene; but begin again, And I will listen to your mournful song, 'Till I shall weep with you.

Imo. O I can weep Enough for you and me, if that will please you.

Gov. You must not weep, I come to dry your tears---

This heart, but throbs to love and to Clemene, As thou hast been its care, be all its joy.

Imo. Let your heart answer for me then, cou'd you,

Forc'd to some distant land, unknown, forlorn, A Slave, dependant on another's will, Cut off from all that habit has endear'd, Cut off from friendship, from domestic Joy---! Could you forget all these!---alas!---they're past---

[Bursts into tears.

Gov. Far from my fair be such desponding thoughts.

I come

I come to offer you your liberty,
 And be myself the slave. You turn away.
 [Following her.]
 But every thing becomes you. I may take
 This pretty hand: I know your modesty
 Will draw it back: But you would take it ill,
 If I should let it go, I know you would.

[She struggles and gets her hand from him, then
 he offers to kiss her.]

Nay if you struggle with me, I must take —

Ima. You may my life, that I can part with freely.

[Exit.]

Enter Blandford, Stanmore, and Oroonoko to him.

Blan. I fear your mistress frowns, you look not like
 A happy lover. How does she receive you?

Gov. Insensible to all I say and do,
 Whene'er I speak to her, she sighs, or weeps,
 But never answers me as I would have her.

Stan. There's something nearer than her slavery,
 That touches her.

Blan. What say her fellow-slaves?
 Do they suspect nothing?

Gov. Some envious tongues
 Have buzz'd about suspicions of her shape,
 But I regard them not.

Blan. Poor wretch! perhaps
 Torn from a husband's side by ruffian hands,
 She mourns her comforts never to return,
 Or weeps her babe fore-doom'd to slavery.

Oro. If it be so, indeed you cannot blame her.

[Sighing.]

Gov. No, no, it is not so: But if it were,
 I should not love her less, nor less expect
 To win her to my wishes.

Blan.

Bland. By fair means
You still may try her, and your road is free.

Gov. I'll give you ten slaves for her.

Bland. She's not mine.

Nor, were she mine, should she become your
purchase,

Against her honest wish. Too well I know
What wild excesses, power and lust, can dare,
To trust her in a youthful lover's hands.

Oro. 'Tis Godlike in you to protect the weak.

Gov. Fie, fie, I would not force her. Tho' she be
A slave, her mind is free, and should consent.

Oro. Such honour will engage her to consent:
Shall we not see this wonder?

Gov. Have a care;

You have a heart, and she has conqu'ring eyes.

Oro. I have a heart:—but, to the brightest eyes
Cold, as I fear, the beauties, it adored.

O! my lost, injur'd Fair! O *Imoinda*,
Living or dead, I can be only thine.

Blan. *Imoinda* was his wife: She's either dead,
Or living, dead to him; forc'd from his arms
By an inhuman father. Another time,
I'll tell you all.

[*To the Gov.*

Stan. Hark! 'tis the alarum Bell [Bell rings]

That sounds its deathful summons—How now?—
What?—

*Captain Driver and several Planters enter with their
Swords drawn.*

Capt. Where are you, Governor? Make what
haste you can.

To save yourself and the whole Colony.
I bad 'em ring the bell.

C

Gov.

Gov. What's the Matter?

1st Plan. The Indians are come down upon us: They have plunder'd some of the Plantations already, and are marching this Way as fast as they can.

Gov. What can we do against 'em?

Bland. We shall be able to make a Stand, 'till more Planters come in to us.

2d Plan. There are a great many more without, if you would shew yourself, and put us in order.

Gov. There's no danger of the white slaves, they'll not stir. Blandford, come you along with me: Some of you stay here to look after the black Slaves.

[All go out but the Captain and six Planters, who all at once seize Oroonoko.]

1st Plant. Ay, ay, let us alone.

Capt. In the first place we secure you, Sir, As an enemy to the government.

Oro. Are you there, Sir? You are my constant Friend.

1st Plan. You will be able to do a great deal of Mischief.

Capt. But we shall prevent you: Bring the Irons hither. He has the malice of a slave in him, and would be glad to be cutting his masters throats. I know him. Chain his hands and feet, that he may not run over to 'em. If they have him, they shall carry him on their backs, that I can tell 'em.

[As they are chaining him, Blandford enters, runs to 'em.]

Bland. What are you doing there?

Capt. Securing the main chance: This is a bosom enemy.

Blan. Away, you brutes: I'll answer with my life For his behaviour; so tell the Governor.

Capt.

Capt. Plan. Well, Sir, so we will.

[Exeunt Captain and Planters.]

Oro. Give me a sword, and I'll deserve your trust.

A party of Indians enter, hurrying Imoinda among the slaves; another party of Indians sustain 'em retreating, followed at a distance by the Governor with the Planters: Blandford, Oroonoko join 'em.

Blan. Confusion! See, they hurry off our Slaves
Before our faces----Can you stand tamely by
[To the Gov.]

And suffer this? Your mistress is among them.

Gov. We throw ourselves away, in the attempt
To rescue 'em.

Oro. A lover cannot fall more gloriously,
Than in the cause of love. He, that deserves
His mistress' favour, will not stay behind:
I'll lead you on, be bold, and follow me.

[Oroonoko, at the Head of the Planters, falls upon the Indians with a great Shout, and beats 'em off.]

Enter Imoinda.

Imo. I'm tost about by my tempestuous fate,
And no where must have rest; Indians, or English!
Whoever has me, I am still a slave.
No matter whose I am, since I'm no more
My royal master's; since I'm his no more.
O I was happy! nay, I will be happy,
In the dear Thought that I am still his wife,
Tho' far divided from him.

[Draws off to a Corner of the Stage.]

After a Shout enter the Governor with Oroonoko, Blandford, Stanmore, and the Planters.

Gov. Now, gallant Prince, whose warlike spirit
proves

Your high descent, accept our gen'ral thanks.

[All bow to Oroonoko.]

And what we can do more to recompense
Such noble services, you shall command.
Clemene too shall thank you——she is safe——
Look up, and bless your brave deliverer.

[Brings Clemene forward, looking down on the ground.]

Oro. Bless me indeed!

Blan. You start!

Oro. Ye mighty powers

Who guide this changeful world, and bring about
Things strange, and unexpected, can it be?

Gov. What is't you stare at so?

Oro. Answer me, some of you, you who have
pow'r,

And have your senses free; Or are you all
Struck thro' with wonder too?

[Looking still fixed on her.]

Blan. What would you know?

Oro. I strive in vain to know myself or her.

What? here----a slave---O 'tis impossible!---
I shall be mad.

Gov. What means this strange commotion?

Oro. If 'tis delusion---if it be not she,

My Imoinda——

[She looks upon him, and falls
into a Swoon, he runs to her.]

Ha! she faints!

Nay, then it must be she; 'tis Imoinda;

My heart confesses her, and leaps for joy,

To welcome her to her own empire here.

[Embraces her.]

Oro. Imoinda! Oh! thy Oroonoko calls.

Imoinda coming to Life.

Imo. My Oroonoko! Oh! I can't believe

What

What any man can say. But, if I am
 To be deceiv'd, there's something in that name,
 That voice, that face— [Staring at him.
 O! if I know myself,
 I cannot be mistaken.

[Runs and embraces Oroonoko.

Oro. Never here:
 You cannot be mistaken: I am yours,
 Yours *Oroonoko*, all that you would have.

Imo. All, all, indeed,
 That I would have: My husband! then I am
 Alive, and waking to the joys I feel:
 They were so great, I could not think 'em true;
 But I believe all that you say to me:
 For truth itself and everlasting love
 Grows in this breast, and pleasure in these arms.

Oro. Take, take me all: Enquire into my heart,
 (You know the way to ev'ry secret there)
 My heart the sacred treasury of love;
 And if, in absence, I have misemploy'd
 A mite from the rich store: If I have spent
 A wish, a sigh, but what I sent to you:
 May I be curs'd to wish, and sigh in vain,
 And you not pity me.

Imo. O! I believe,
 And know you by myself. If these sad eyes,
 Since last we parted, have beheld the face
 Of any comfort; or once wish'd to see
 The light of any other heav'n but you,
 May I be struck this moment blind, and lose
 Your blessed sight, never to find you more.

Stan. Where's your mistress now, Governor?

Gov. Why, where most men's mistresses are forc-
 ed to be sometimes,
 With her husband, it seems! But I won't lose her so.

[Aside.
 Stan.

Stan. He has fought lustily for her, and deserves her.
I'll say that for him.

Oro. O! in this transport we have both forgot
That we are not our own—Those beauteous arms,
Form'd to imprison kings, have they not felt
The weight of shackles? O I dare not ask
What that defenceless, tender frame has suffer'd,
Since, foully ravish'd from my guardian arms,
The savage Christian seiz'd thee for his prey.—

[To *Blan.*]

I pray you pardon me—tumultuous thought
Bears me I know not whither—You are good—
And my heart rests on knowledge of your virtue.

Blan. Too just is your reproach, your history
Must redden each European cheek with shame.

Oro. Think not the loss of freedom swells my heart,
For, thus to love restor'd, I am most happy;
But can I bear to see my Wife, my Princess,
Crouch to a master's nod? perhaps compell'd
By shameful labour, to secure the grant
Of cold protection, and of scanty grace.
O Europe! cursed be the hour that gave
Thy cruel sons to visit Afric's shore!

Blan. Enough of this sad theme—Hope every thing
From our expected Chief—But let me now
Congratulate your happiness—

Gov. And all of us; but how comes it to pass—

Oro. That will require

More precious time than I can spare you now.

I have a thousand things to ask of her,

And she as many more to know of me.

O! my full heart! What changes hast thou found!

I dare not trust my fortune, tho' I feel

Pleasure, long dead, revive. My Fair one found,

But half restor'd, I can no more protect,

And whom I lost a Princess, find a Slave.

ACT III.

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

Aboan, Hotman, and Slaves.

Hot. **W**HAT! to be slaves to cowards, slaves to rogues,
Who can't defend themselves!

Aboan. This is the time
To slip your fetters—dare but to be men,
And your soft masters soon will fly before you.

Hot. Go, sneak in corners; whisper out your
griefs,
For fear your masters hear you: Cringe and crouch
Under the bloody whip, like beaten curs,
That lick their wounds, and know no other cure.
All, wretches all! you feel their cruelty,
As much as I can feel, but dare not groan.
For my part, while I have a life and tongue.

I'll curse the authors of my slavery.

1st. *Slave.* Have you been long a slave?

Hot. Yes, many years.

1st. *Slave.* And do you only curse?

Hot. Curse! only curse! I cannot conjure,
To raise the spirits up of other men:
I am but one. O! for a soul of fire,
To warm, and animate our common cause,
And make a body of us, then I would
Do something more than curse.

1st *Slave*. That body set on foot, would you be
one,
A limb, to lend it motion? *Hot.*

Hot.

Hot. I would be
The heart of it; the head, the hand, and heart :
Would I could see the day !

1st Slave. You will do all yourself.

Hot. I would do more
Than I shall speak, but I may find a Time —

Enter Blandford.

1st. Slave. We're interrupted now—we'll meet
anon.

Blan. If there be any one among you here
That did belong to Oroonoko, speak,
I come to him.

Aboan. I did belong to him. *Aboan* my name.

Blan. You are the man I want; pray come with
me. [*Exeunt.*

S C E N E II.

Enter Oroonoko and Imoinda.

Oro. I do not blame my father for his love:
He could not help his adoration.
But when I think on his barbarity,
That could expose you to so many wrongs;
Driving you out to wretched slavery,
Only for being mine; then I confess
I wish I could forget the name of son,
That I might curse the tyrant.

Imo. I will bless him,
For I have found you here: Heav'n only knows
What is reserv'd for us: But, if we guess
The future by the past, our Fortune must
Be wonderful, above the common size

Of

Of good or ill; it must be in extremes :
Extremely happy, or extremely wretched.

Oro. 'Tis in our pow'r to make it happy now.

Imo. But not to keep it so.

Enter Blandford and Aboan.

Blan. My Royal Lord!

I have a present for you.

Oro. Aboan!

Abo. Your lowest slave.

Oro. My try'd and valu'd friend.

This worthy Man always prevents my wants :
I only wish'd, and he has brought thee to me.

Thou art surpriz'd: Carry thy duty there:

[*Aboan goes to Imoinda, and falls at her feet.*]

While I acknowledge mine, how shall I thank you?

Blan. Believe me honest to your interest,
And I am more than paid. I have secur'd
That all your followers shall be gently us'd
Mean time I bring your faithful Aboan
To wait upon your person, while you stay
Among us.

Oro. I owe every thing to you.

Blan. You must not think you are in slavery.

Oro. I do not find I am.

Blan. Kind Heav'n has miraculously sent
Those comforts, that may teach you to expect
Its farther care, in your deliverance.

Oro. I sometimes think myself, Heav'n is
concern'd
For my deliverance.

Blan. It will be soon;
You may expect it. Pray, in the mean time,
Appear as chearful as you can among us.
You have some enemies, that represent
You dangerous, and would be glad to find

D

A reason

A reason, in your discontent, to fear:
They watch your looks. But there are honest men,
Who are your friends: You are secur'd in them.

Oro. I thank you for your caution.

Blan. I will leave you:

And be assur'd I wish your liberty. *Exit. Bland.*

Abo. He speaks you very fair.

Oro. He means me fair.

Abo. If he should not, my Lord?

Oro. If he should not?

I'll not suspect his truth: But if I did,
What shall I get by doubting?

Abo. You secure

Yourself from disappointment: but besides,
There's this advantage in suspecting him:

When you put off the hopes of other Men,
You will rely upon your God-like self:

And then you may be sure of Liberty.

Oro. Be sure of liberty! what dost thou mean,
Advising to rely upon myself?

I think I may be sure on't: We must wait:

'Tis worth a little patience. [*Turning to Imoinda.*

Abo. O my Lord!

Oro. What dost thou drive at?

Abo. Sir, Another time

You would have found it sooner: But I see
Love has your heart, and takes up all your thoughts.

Oro. And can'st thou blame me?

Abo. Sir, I must not blame you.

But, as our fortune stands, there is a passion
(Your pardon, Royal Mistress, I must speak)
That would become you better than your love:

A brave resentment: which, inspir'd by you,
Might kindle and diffuse a gen'rous rage
Among the slaves, to rouse and shake our chains,
And struggle to be free.

Oro.

Oro. How can we help ourselves?

Abo. I knew you when you wou'd have found a way.

How, help ourselves! the very Indians teach us:
We need but to attempt our liberty,

And we may carry it. We have hands sufficient,
Double the number of our masters' forces,
Ready to be employ'd. What hinders us
To set 'em then at work? We want but you,
To head our enterprize, and bid us strike.

Oro. What would you do?

Abo. Cut our oppressors throats.

Oro. And you would have me join in your design
Of murther?

Abo. It deserves a better name:

But, be it what it will, 'tis justify'd
By self-defence, and natural liberty.

Oro. I'll hear no more on't.

Abo. I'm sorry for't.

Oro. Nor shall you think of it!

Abo. Not think of it!

Oro. No, I command you not.

Abo. Remember, Sir,

You are a slave yourself, and to command
Is now another's right. Not think of it!
Since the first moment they put on my chains,
I've thought nothing but the weight of 'em,
And how to throw 'em off: Can yours sit easy?

Oro. I have a sense of my condition,
As painful, and as quick, as your's can be.
I feel for Imoinda and myself;

Imoinda, much the tenderest part of me.

But, tho' I languish for my liberty,

I would not buy it at the Christian price
Of vile ingratitude: They shall not say,

That we deserv'd our fortune by our crimes.
Murder the innocent!

Abo. My royal lord!

You do not know the heavy grievances,
The toils, the labours, weary drudgeries,
Which they impose; Burdens more fit for beasts,
For senseless beasts to bear, than thinking men.
Then if you saw the bloody cruelties
They execute on every slight offence;
Nay, sometimes in their proud, insulting sport,
How worse than dogs they lash their fellow-crea-
tures;

Your heart would bleed for 'em. Oh! could you
know

How many wretches lift their hands and eyes
To you for their relief!

Oro. I pity 'em,

And wish I could with honesty do more.

Abo. If any cause can fire the gen'rous breast,
If any wrong provoke to retribution,
'Tis the poor harrass'd slave's. With honesty!
With praise, you may, you must attempt our rescue.
Were we not snar'd by treachery? all those
wretches

Who moisten yon parch'd furrows with their tears,
Were they not gain'd by blood,—by fraud?

Oro. No more—

Thou know'st the friendship of the gen'rous
Blandford;

Shall I attempt my benefactor's life?

Or rashly risk, in ill-concerted brawls,

A life more dear, more precious than my own?

Abo. By what enchantment is my prince beguil'd
Again to trust European honesty?

Why are you here? or need you to be told,

These

These are the men who yearly on our coasts
 Spread war and desolation, cut the bands
 Of filial love, of family delight,
 And gen'ral virtue:—Whose accursed arts
 Corrupt th' ingenuous negro, and inlay
 Our honest black with Christian wickedness.
 Desarts pursue their steps; and from their face
 The blasted Nations vanish. Trust them not.

Oro. Yet Blandford's honest—why should he
 deceive me?

Abo. Grant that he's honest—yet his power
 will end;

You have another master, yet unknown,
 Who, proud perhaps to own a Royal Slave,
 May suffer you to get young princes for him.

Oro. What hast thou said?

Abo. Princes, the heirs of empire,
 The last of your illustrious lineage, born
 To pamper up his pride, and be his slaves.

Oro. O Imoinda! save me from that thought—

Imo. There's no safety from it: I have long
 Suffer'd it with a mother's labouring pains;
 And can no longer. Kill me, kill me now,
 While I am blest, and happy in your love;
 Rather than let me live to see you hate me:
 As you must hate me: Me, the only cause,
 The fountain of these flowing miseries.

Oro. Shall the dear babe, the eldest of my hopes,
 Whom I begot a prince, be born a slave?
 The treasure of this temple, was design'd
 T' enrich a kingdom's fortune: Shall it here
 Be seiz'd upon by vile unhallow'd hands,
 To be employ'd in uses most profane?

Abo. In most unworthy uses; think of that
 And, while you may, prevent it. O my lord,
 Rely

Rely on nothing that they say to you.
 They speak you fair, I know, and bid you wait :
 But think what 'tis to wait on promises,
 And promises of men who know no tie
 Upon their Words, against their interest :
 And where's their Interest in freeing you ?

Imo. O! where indeed, to lose so many slaves ?

Abo. Nay, grant this man, you think so much
 your friend,

Be honest, and intends all that he says ;
 He is but one ; and in a government,
 Where, he confesses, you have enemies,
 That watch your looks. What looks can you put on,
 To please these men, who are before resolv'd
 To read 'em their own way ? Alas ! my lord,
 If they incline to think you dangerous,
 They have their knavish arts to make you so :
 And then who knows how far their cruelty
 May carry their revenge ?

Imo. To every thing

That does belong to you, your friends, and me :
 I shall be torn from you, forced away,
 Helpless and miserable : Shall I live
 To see that day again ?

Oro. That day shall never come.

Abo. I know you hope the governor's arrival
 Will give you Freedom—are you assur'd of that ?
 I rather dread more mischief from his coming :
 For he is young, luxurious, absolute,
 And should his eye with lawless ardour fix
 Upon your princess, whom you cannot shield,
 What may not youth and power and passion prompt ?

Oro. There, there thou hast me—What ? a hot
 young chief ?

He will not part with her—and I must crouch,

And

And hold the door for my dishonourer!
 Lead me to thy companions. Summon them.
 Assemble them. If I do find them apt
 I'll head their foremost resolutions.

Abo. I have provided those will follow you.

Oro. With this reserve in our proceedings still,
 The means that lead us to our liberty
 Must not be bloody.

Abo. You command in all. [Exeunt.

S C E N E III.

Oroonoko, Aboan, Hotman, Slaves.

Oro. We must succeed—for nature bids us arm
 To crush the tyrants who degrade her works—
 No private sufferings urge me to your side—
 You've known me honour'd, courted here, and soon
 Would see me publicly restored to freedom,
 And royal rights. But never should my ear
 Forget the bondman's cry; still should I droop,
 For my sad brethren left in slavery.

Let us be jointly free, or jointly perish.
 Say, now, which course were best to gain some spot,
 Where rocks abrupt, or steep-ascending hills
 That skirt the beach, present a sure retreat,
 Till, launch'd in light canoes, we may surprize
 Th' unwarlike vessel of some trading Christian?

Hotm. I fear you'll find the march impossible.

Oro. Impossible! nothing's impossible:
 We know our strength only by being try'd.
 What can oppose us then but we may tame?
 All things submit to virtuous industry.

Slave. Great Sir, we have attended all you said,
 With silent joy and admiration:

And,

And, were we only men, would follow such,
 So great a leader, thro' the untry'd world.
 But, oh! consider we have other names,
 Husbands and fathers, and have things more dear,
 To us than life, our children and our wives,
 Unfit for such an expedition:
 What must become of them?

Oro. We will not wrong
 The virtue of our women, to believe
 There is a wife among them would refuse
 To share her husband's fortune. They have born
 More dreadful ills than any now before them.
 Have they not seen the partners of their breast
 With scourges torn? Beheld them bite the ground
 In speechless agony? Has pity spar'd their sex?
 Or have a mother's cares and burden gain'd
 Compassion for their weakness? Answer me,
 Ye who so oft have felt that direst pang,
 When, in the tort'rer's hands, a wretched wife,
 Has scream'd for mercy, has implor'd your aid,
 While your distraction made the Christian sport.

Abo. Heav'n favours our attempt. The fatal ship
 In whose dread womb so long we lay enchain'd;
 Rides in the river, negligently kept;
 What hinders but we seize her?

Oro. It shall be so:
 There is a justice in it pleases me:
 Do you agree to it? [To the Slaves.

Omnes. We follow you.

Oro. You do not relish it. [To Hotman.

Hot. I am afraid
 You'll find it difficult and dangerous.

Abo. Are you the man to find the dangers first?
 You should have giv'n example. Dangerous!
 I thought you had not understood the word;

You,

You, who would be the head, the hand and heart;
 Sir, I remember you, you can talk well;
 I will not doubt but you'll maintain your word.

Oro. This fellow is not right; I'll try him further;
 [To Aboan.

The danger will be certain to us all,
 And death most certain in miscarrying.
 We must expect no mercy, if we fail:
 Therefore our way must be not to expect:
 We'll put it out of expectation,
 By death upon the place, or liberty.
 There's no man here I hope, but comes prepar'd
 For all that can befall him.

Hot. Prepar'd? Yes, yes,
 We are prepar'd to be sure.

Abo. Observe him now. [To Oro. concerning Hot.
 I could die, altogether, like a man;
 As you, and you, and all of us, must do.
 But who can promise for his bravery
 Upon the rack? where fainting, weary life,
 Hunted thro' ev'ry limb, is forced to feel
 An agonizing death of all its parts?
 Who can bear this? resolve to be empal'd?
 His skin flead off, and roasted yet alive?
 The quivering flesh torn from his broken bones
 By burning pincers? Who can bear these pains?

Hot. They are not to be borne.

[Discovering all the confusion of fear.

Oro. You see him now, this man of mighty words!

Abo. How his eyes roll!

Oro. He cannot hide his fear:

Abo. I could not have believ'd it. Such a blaze,
 And not a spark of fire!

Oro. His violence

Made me suspect: Now I'm convinc'd.

E

Abo.

Abo. What shall we do with him?

Oro. He is not fit——

Abo. Fit!—-he is only fit to be
Just what he is, to live and die a slave.

Oro. We are not safe with him.

Abo. Do you think so?

Oro. He'll certainly betray us.

Abo. That he shan't:

I can take care of that; I have a way
To take his evidence off.

Oro. What way?

Abo. I'll stop his mouth before you, stab him here;
And then let him inform.

[*Going to stab Hotman, Oroonoko holds him.*

Oro. Thou art not mad?

Abo. I would secure ourselves.

[*aside.*

Oro. It shall not be this way; nay cannot be:
His murder will intimidate the rest,
Make 'em suspect us of barbarity,
And, may be, fall away from our design.
We'll not set out in blood. We have, my friends,
This night to furnish what we can provide
For our security and just defence.
If there be one among us we suspect
Of baseness, or vile fear, it will become
Our common care to have an eye on him:
I will not name the man.

Abo. You guess at him. [To Hotman.

Oro. To-night our tyrants plung'd in careless
sleep,

We rendezvous behind the citron grove.
That ship secur'd we may transport ourselves
To our respective homes: My father's kingdom
Shall open her wide arms to take you in,

And

And nurse you for her own, adopt you all,
All, who will follow me.

Omnes. All, all follow you.

Oro. There ease and honour shall reward your
-suff'rings,

And never more shall Christian plund'ers fix
Their impious feet on fair Angola's sands.

On, then, to our attempt---we know the worst:
Or death relieves, or freedom crowns our toils.

Should fate the sceptre to this hand restore,
The injur'd African shall mourn no more---

Safe in his plantain grove shall tend his bounds,
And war receding die in distant sounds.

A C T IV.

SCENE I. *The Citron-Grove; Moonlight.*

Oroonoko, Aboan, Imoinda, Slaves.

Oro. COME on my friends! see where the rising
Moon

Now shines upon our purpose! let our march

At once be swift and silent, like her course;

The ship surpriz'd, we triumph without conflict,

Nor mark our way to liberty with blood.

Enter a Slave.

Slave. My Lord, as from the tam'rind bank

I watch'd

The Christians' motions, I perceiv'd the ship

Glide on the clear swell of the rippling tide
Down the broad river---Now she lies secur'd
Beyond the sea-mark, from surprize or force.
Meanwhile, towards the av'nes of this grove,
I saw the gleaming files direct their course
From the tall fortress. Think you are betray'd.

Oro. The women and the children fall behind;
Now hangs our fortune on each single Arm;
Be resolute, and we succeed. Retire; [To Imoinda.
Thou treasure of my life, thy danger shakes me.

Imo. I fear no danger: Life or death with you
Resolved I share; a victim or a Queen.

Oro. They come; and in their front, the traitor
Hotman.

Abo. O! may the fortune of this day present
That dastard wretch, to my impatient arm!

Enter Governor, Hotman, Soldiers.

Gov. Mistaken men! Resign your usefess rage:
Our troops possess each pass; you cannot move,
But they will gore your ill-defended sides.
Unarm'd, undisciplin'd, what can you do
Against these files, whose aim is certain death?
I speak to save your blood. Repent and live.

Oro. You speak with power; but look upon these
men
Whom you have outraged---what is force to us?
We have felt all that lawless force can do.
You tore our Freedom from us: now we come
Desp'rate to gain it back, or perish here.

Captain Driver.

Capt. What! parlying with these dogs? the
mongrel runaways, that dreamt of seizing on the
lovely

lovely Kitty? Fall on my lads, and give the fowls a
supper. You Mr. Caesar, I'll take care of you. T

[Attacks Oroonoko, who kills him.]

Oro. There! I am quit with one offender.

Gov. Hold!

He has paid the price of rashness—Let me still
Offer you mercy. For the gen'ral good,
Not for revenge, do I pursue your steps.

Oro. Regard that public good: Draw off your
men,

And leave us to our fortune: We're resolv'd.

Gov. Resolv'd! on what? your resolutions
Are broken, overturn'd, prevented, lost:
Famine must eat you up, if you go on.

You see our numbers could with ease compel
What we request: And what do we request?
Only to save yourselves.

[The women, with their children, gathering about the men.]

Oro. I'll hear no more.

Abo. Advance! Freedom and vengeance!

Gov. To those poor wretches, who have been
seduc'd

And led away, to all, and ev'ry one,
We offer a full Pardon—

Oro. Then fall on. *[Preparing to engage.]*

Gov. Lay hold upon't, before it be too late,
Pardon and Mercy.

*[The women clinging about the men, they leave
Oroonoko, and fall upon their Faces, crying
out for pardon.]*

Slaves. Pardon, Mercy, Pardon.

Oro. And is it thus? Is this to be a Slave,
To be a man no more in ought but shape?
Now, Tyrants, I perceive your lashes cut,
Ev'n deeper than I knew; they mark the soul.

Away,

Away, you tim'rous herd! I were asham'd
To spill my blood on the same earth with yours!
We were too few before for victory,
We're still enow to die. [*To Imoinda and Aboan.*

His arm is—Enter Blandford.

Gov. Live, Royal Sir;
Live, and be happy long on your own terms:
Only consent to yield, and you shall have
What terms you can propose, for you, and yours.

Oro. Consent to yield! shall I betray myself?

Blan. I'm glad you have proceeded by fair means,
I came to be a mediator. [*To the Governor.*

Gov. Try what you can work upon him.

Oro. Are you come against me too?

Blan. Is this to come against you?

[*Giving his sword to Oroonoko.*

Unarm'd to put myself into your Hands?

I come, I hope, to serve you.

Oro. You have serv'd me;

I thank you for't: And I am pleas'd to think

You were my friend, while I had need of one:

But now 'tis past; this farewell, and be gone.

[*Embraces him.*

Blan. It is not past, and I must serve you still.

Abo. My Royal Master, trust not to their words;
They dread your fury now, but, once disarm'd,
You'll have another proof of Christian faith
More shameful than the wiles of that dead dog.

[*Points to Driver.*

Oro. I know what I have done, and I should be
A child to think they ever can forgive:
Forgive! Were there but that, I would not live
To be forgiven: Is there a power on earth,
That I can ever need forgiveness from? *Blan.*

Blan. You shall not need it.

Oro. No, I will not need it.

Blan. You see he offers you your own conditions,
For you and yours.

Oro. Must I capitulate?
Precariously compound on stinted terms,
To save my life?

Blan. Sir, he imposes none.
You make 'em for your own security.

Gov. He will rely on what you to say to him.
[To Blandford.]

Offer him what you can, I will confirm
And make all good: be ye my pledge of trust.

Blan. I'll answer with my life for all he says.

Gov. Ay, do, and pay the forfeit if you please.
[Aside.]

Blan. Consider, Sir, can you consent to throw
That blessing from you, you so hardly found,
[Of Imoinda.]
And so much valu'd once?

Oro. Oh! Imoinda;
'Tis she that holds me on this Argument
Of tedious life: I could resolve it soon,
Were this curs'd being only in dispute,
But Imoinda struggles in my soul:
I cannot see her die; and to survive me,
Thus burthen'd, thus expos'd, were worse than
death.

Where'er I turn, my raging thoughts present
Pangs urging pangs. I will debate no more.
Here is the point shall clear my way to peace.

[Raising his Sword.]
Bland. It must not be. O think, ere you provoke
Th' impending blow, of all the tender hopes
That swell'd your bosom ere this rash attempt,
Why

Why will you in its living tomb destroy
The unseen innocent.

Oro. O there I feel
A father's fondness, and a husband's love,
Softens my stern resolves, and bend them to you.
Husband and father! All the melting art
Of eloquence lives in those tender names.
Methinks I see the babe, with infant hands,
Pleading for life, and begging to be born:
Shall I forbid his birth? deny him light?
O Nature! thou disarm'st my subject hands.
This is thy cause, and thou must conquer in it.
Yes, Imoinda! I will venture all
To save thee, and that little innocent:
The world may be a better friend to him,
Than I have found it. Now I yield myself:

[Gives up his sword to the Governor.
The Conflict's past, and we are in your hands.]

[Several men get about Oroonoko and Aboan,
and seize them.]

Gov. So you shall find you are. Dispose of them,
As I commanded.

Bland. Good heaven! you cannot mean

Gov. This is not your concern. Away with them,

Blan. Give me a sword! who thus dishonours me
Shall never bear his triumph from this spot.

Gov. Look to that madman. I must take care
of you. [To Imoinda.]

Imo. I'm at the End
Of all my care: Here will I die with him.

[Holding Oro.]
Oro. You shall not force her from me.

[He holds her.]
Gov. Then I must [They force her from him.]

Try other means, and conquer force by force:
Break, cut off his hold, bring her away. Stan.

Stan. Dear Governor, consider what you do.

Gov. Away —

Imo. I do not ask to live, kill me but here.

Oro. O bloody dogs! Inhuman murderers!

[*Imoinda forc'd out of one Door by the Governor and others. Oroonoko and Aboan hurried out of another.* [Exeunt.

A C T V.

S C E N E I.

Enter Governor, with Blandford and Stanmore.

Blan. **H**A V E you no reverence of good men's censure?

Is there no ill in shame, that you should dare
To bear out perfidy with fullness,
And own no law but your tumultuous passion?

Gov. 'Tis true I promis'd all things to disarm him,
But while he lives, we cannot be secure.
I start at breach of faith as much as you,
But, in the private, breach of faith is virtue,
When it procures a public benefit.

Blan. O! may my country's vengeance ever burst
On those who dare avow so base a thought!
Who on the cheek of reverend Policy
Call a disdainful blush, while they defend
What meaner villains are ashamed to act.

Stan. Sir, be persuaded to maintain your word.

Gov. Whom, since you urge me then, have I
deceived?

F

(For

(For Blandford, risking nothing, is not hurt)
 Whom but a negro? not so good a creature,
 (Not half so docile) as my horse or dog.
 I am not bound by the same ties to him,
 As to my countryman or fellow christian,
 But catch him like a wild beast in my snare,

Blan. Yes, you are bloody hunters, well I know it,
 And dearly one day, shall you answer it.
 What insolence! to strip the injured negro
 Of his last privilege, the rank of man!
 In this most cruel, as your malice flies
 Beyond the limits of its nat'ral range
 T'attempt impossible wrong. But, Sir, remember
 Your honour and your faith are pledged to me
 For Oroonoko's full security,
 I will exact the forfeit to the utmost. (*walks away.*)

Stan. Mis-tim'd severity is ever odious—
 If you persist in Oroonoko's death,
 The slaves, who yielded on like promises,
 Finding your word so easily recall'd,
 May justly be alarmed—perhaps may shew
 A still more desp'rate face of insurrection.
 Then Blandford holds the most distinguish'd place
 In your successor's friendship. Think of that,
 And free th' unhappy prince.

Gov. Well—be it so.
 Blandford! I'm sorry I have wrong'd your virtues,
 But I must strive to make amends for all—
 I'm glad, however, I've secur'd the woman. (*Aside.*)

Blan. All I desire is Oroonoko's safety:
 Come, Stanmore, let us hasten to relieve him.

(*Exeunt.*)

S C E N E II.

The SCENE drawn shews Oroonoko upon his Back, his Legs and Arms stretched out, and chained to the Ground.

Enter Blandford, Stanmore, &c.

Blan. O miserable Sight!

Assist me all to free him from his chains.

[They help him up, and bring him forward, looking down.]

Most injur'd Prince! how shall we clear ourselves?

Stan. We are not guilty of your injuries,
No way consenting to 'em; but abhor,
Abominate, and loath this cruelty.

Oro I know not whether I must thank you yet,
For a precarious freedom, stain'd and tainted
With servile punishment. Your hearts, I know
Are just and good, but I can trust no more
This treach'rous governor. But tell me, tell me,
Is Imoinda safe? O! I have past
Such hours of anxious horror for her fate,
That bare remembrance of my wild distraction
Unseats my brain. Will you not bring her to me?

Blan. Be satisfied, you may depend upon us;
We'll bring her safe to you, and suddenly.

In the mean time

Endeavour to forget, Sir, and forgive;

And hope a better fortune.

[Exeunt.]

Oroonoko alone.

Oro Forget! forgive! I must indeed forget,
When I forgive: But while I am a man,

In flesh, that bears the living marks of shame,
 The print of my dishonourable chains,
 I never can forgive! My anger's honest.
 For if my tyrant has abused me thus,
 Against the faith of treaty; in defiance
 Of Blandford's solemn pledge, and friendly zeal,
 What must he feel, who, crouching to his fortune,
 Unknown and unprotected, drags along,
 The pressing load of many a year of bondage!
 Friendship and love may sooth my troubled mind;
 Freedom may come, and, dearer now than freedom,
 Th' expected hour may offer me revenge.
 But the poor slave, who vents the hourly groan
 From his o'er-burden'd breast, can never know
 The least of my faint hopes: his meanest ill
 Is want of nature's comforts, and his best
 His only kind relieving friend is death.

[To him, Stanmore.

Stan. Have you not found where Imoinda's hid?

Oro. Hid! what—how! is she gone! what mean
 you, Stanmore?

Stan. Nay then, I fear the subtle Governor
 Will justify our doubts. She is conceal'd;
 He says, without his knowledge; but his looks
 Betray a strange suspicious watchfulness
 O'er some close thoughts.

Oro. O! give me way.

Stan. Nay, whither?

Oro. Let me go hence. I'll stab him to the
 heart.

Stan. You shall not move—This is the frantic fit
 Of undiscerning rage. What can you do?
 You know a constant guard attends our chief,
 That mocks the rage of any single arm—
 Blandford to-day observes him: rest on that:

Perhaps

Perhaps e'er this your Imoinda's free.
But all's not right—I fear some farther force,
From this impetuous, and too powerful man.

Oro. Shew me but Imoinda once again—
I know the way to part with her no more.

—*Stan.* Retire to Parham-House. Avoid the
Governor.

We'll labour to dispose him properly. [*Exeunt.*

S C E N E III.

The Lieut. Governor's House.—Governor, Servant.

Gov. Escap'd! impossible! without some treach'ry
She could not free herself, she has soften'd some
of you

By idle whimp'ring. Send a party for her:

If I can seize her once again, she shall

No longer trifle with my purposes. [*Exit Servant.*

Blandford's a fool, else I had soon possess'd

This peevish toy. I must dispatch her husband:

He may be troublesome. Who now shall say

That I am cruel, base, or tyrannous,

Has never known the privilege of power—

I but indulge those passions to the full,

Which gnaw the impotent breasts of meaner men.

Wild were ambition, if, as greybeards dream,

And prating fools believe, the end of power

Were to advance the happiness of others.

The Great are suns too dazzling not to scorch.

[*Shout within.*

Re-enter Servant.

Gov. What noise is that?

Serv. The governor's arrived.

Gov.

Gov. Then I'm undone. In ev'ry contest yet
Has Blandford's genius aw'd me into shame.

Enter Blandford.

You come to taste your triumph. 'Tis your day—
But tho' I may be crush'd I will not crouch.

Blan. Be not thus haughty: never did my lips
Insult a fallen foe; tho' you have done
What I detest in Aboan's punishment;
And much I fear your rage has found a time
To feast most bloodily on th' injur'd Prince.

Gov. Whatever ills that miscreant may occasion,
The colony knows whom to thank for it.

Blan. Sir, do not waste your spirits, you will
need them.

The Governor excuses your attendance,
And wishes you to make these walls your bounds,
'Till you find leisure to explain your conduct.

Gov. You shall soon know that I have right and
friends
Sufficient to protect me from your malice.

[*Exit.*

Blan. This task dispatch'd, I go with joyful steps
To raise the sick'ning hearts, and right the fortunes
Of this most faithful, injur'd, royal pair.
With the same breath, would I had power to offer
Relief to ev'ry drooping African
'That now must envy their deliverance!
England! my country! shall no ray of freedom
Part from thy shining cliffs to cheer these wretches?
In what blest age, shall thy exalted sons
Impart to all, the liberty they love?

[*Exit.*

S C E N E last. — *A Wood.*

Enter Oroonoko.

Oro. She is not to be found. I cannot live
In this suspense of torture and despair;
But must approach again yon' fatal walls,
Tho' certain death attend discovery.
This wretch—this governor—O! I am lost
In horrible conjecture! Imoinda—
My life—my princess—give me Imoinda,
Or I will tear the barr'd and sullen doors
From their firm seat, that we may meet again,
And meeting die together!—What do I see?

Enter Aboan bloody.

My eyes are turn'd against me, and combine
With my sworn enemies, to represent
This spectacle of horror. *Aboan!*
My ever faithful friend!

Abo. I have no name
That can distinguish me from the vile earth,
To which I'm going: a poor abject worm,
That crawl'd awhile upon the bustling world,
And now am trampled into dust again.

Oro. I see thee gash'd and mangled.

Abo. Spare my shame.
To tell how they have us'd me: but believe
The hangman's hand would have been merciful.
Do not you scorn me, sir, to think I can
Intend to live under this infamy.
I do not come for pity, but to serve you.
I've spent an honourable life with you.

The

The earliest servant of your rising fame,
And would attend it with my latest care :
You must not live.

Bending and sinking, I have dragg'd my steps,
Thus far to tell you that you cannot live :

To warn you of those ignominious wrongs,
Whips, rods, and all the instruments of death,
Which I have felt, and are prepar'd for you.
This was the duty that I had to pay.
'Tis done, and now I beg to be discharg'd.

Oro. What shall I do for thee?

Abo. My body tires,
And will not bear me off to liberty :
I shall again be taken, made a slave.
A sword, a dagger yet would rescue me.
I have not strength to go and find out death,
You must direct him to me.

Oro. Here he is, [Gives him a dagger.]

The only present I can make thee now :
And, next the honourable means of life,
I would bestow the honest means of death.

Abo. I cannot stay to thank you. If there is
A being after this, I shall be yours
In the next world, your faithful slave again.
This is to try. [Stabs himself.]
I will not say farewell,
For you must follow me. [Dies.]

Oro. In life and death,
The guardian of my honour ! I follow thee !
I should have gone before thee : then perhaps
Thy fate had been prevented. All his care
Was to preserve me from the barbarous rage
That worry'd him, only for being mine.
Mis'ry pursues whate'er has known a tye

To

To my ill-fated being—Like the tree
 Whose leaf converts the gentle dews of heav'n
 To a corrosive venom, I have stood,
 And breath'd a lurid atmosphere around
 Of slav'ry and of blood: Mistress and friends
 Have I destroy'd, and, now must steal to death
 With a thief's caution to escape from shame.

Enter to him Imoinda.

Oro. 'Tis she! But why disorder'd, breathless,
 pale?

Art thou pursued? take refuge in these arms.
 What would'st thou say?

Imo. 'Tis vain to call him villain.

Oro. Call him Governor: is it not so?

Imo. There's not another sure.

Oro. Villain's the common name of mankind
 here,

But his most properly. What! what of him?
 I fear to be resolv'd, and must enquire.
 He had thee in his power.

Imo. I blush to think it.

Oro. Blush! to think what!

Imo. That I was in his power.

Oro. He cou'd not use it.

Imo. What can't such men do?

Oro. But did he, durst he?

Imo. What he cou'd, he dar'd.

Oro. His own Gods damn him then! For ours
 have none,

No punishment for such unheard of crime.

Imo. This monster, cunning in his flatteries,
 When he had weary'd all his useless arts,
 Leap'd out, fierce as a beast of prey, to seize me.
 I trembl'd, fear'd.

Oro.

Oro. I fear and tremble now:
What could preserve thee? What deliver thee?

Imo. That worthy man, you us'd to call your
friend.

Oro. Blandford?

Imo. Came in, and sav'd me from his rage.
I found a gentle keeper, touch'd with pity
Of my most cruel sull' rings, who dismiss me,
With fearful warning of his Lord's designs,
And sear'ching long, I have at length rejoin'd you—
What will become of us?

Oro. I know my fate,
And still am master of my narrow choice;
I too have met a warning. [*Shews Aboan's body.*]

Imo. Aboan!

Oro. Mangled and torn, resolv'd to give me time
To fit myself for what I must expect,
Groan'd out a warning to me, and expir'd.

Imo. For what you must expect?

Oro. Would that were all!

Imo. What to be butcher'd thus—

Oro. I have run the race with honour, shall I now
Lag, and be overtaken at the goal?

Imo. [*Weeping*] O we must part.

Oro. I would—How shall I speak it?
I would secure thee from the ruffian's grasp.
There is no hope of mercy from these Christians.

Imo. Secure my safety then: before we met
I had resolv'd to die: all I intreat
Is to die first. I could not see your blood.

[*Turning aside.*]
Oro. O down my heart! else I shall lose in tears
The precious moments that must set us free.

Imo. Come, I am fix'd—shew me the way to
peace.

Oro.

Oro. Here's our deliverer. [Shows the dagger]

Why dost thou start?

Imo. Alas I faint, this coward-flesh refuses
To aid my heart, and shakes at sight of death.
Bear with my weakness, — I am ready now.

Oro. Thou tremblest still. O most accursed

Fiends, That make this cruelty an act of love! —

Must I deface this idol of my heart?

Is it for me to strike the living bloom

From that dear cheek, and murder in that bosom

Ten thousand tender doating thoughts of me?

No! Come, destroyers of my wretched race,

Come with your fires, your steel, and every engine

Your savage industry has form'd to pain:

Let me feel all, so Imoinda live.

Imo. O no! I must not live---you would not

leave me

To the wild passions of this governor---

O! kindly send me to that happy land,

Where our loves grew---to joy and freedom send

me,

Where Christians shall disturb our peace no more.

Alas, they come! quick, put me out of pain.

Oro. I cannot strike---a more than infant

weakness

Hangs on my arm. I'll turn away my face---

And then ---

Imo. Why do you linger?

[Noise within.] Oroonoko!

Oro. They're here! — Nay then [Stabs her,

Imo. Give me your hand—my life

Flits fast— O still my guardian! hold me—Oh!

[Dies.

To him, Blandford, Stanmore, with their Party.

Blan.

Blan. We come too late,—unhappy man! this
rashness

Destroys the fortune I had built for you.

Oro. Give me the governot, that I may tear him
With these yet bloody fangs—then kill me as you
please.

Blan. He is not here, I came to fix your freedom,
Honour and happiness; in one dire moment
Have you up-rooted and dispers'd them all—
Be gentle yet; give me your hand.

Oro. Stand off.

I know you not—I'm wild and dangerous. You
are a white man—you take me for a mischievous
beast, and sawn upon me, that you may strike safe-
ly. You entrap us for your ease, and murder us
for your sport. Now let me see your daring—
Look there ——— [Looks at Imoinda's body]
You forc'd me to it—Durst you have done this?
Or dare you cope me thus?

[Stabs himself, falls beside Imoinda, and dies.]

Blan. A desperate deed, and fatally atchiev'd!
But you [To Stanmore, &c.] who mutely eye this
scene of horror,

Curse not the erring arm—the guilt is ours;
For deeds like these are slav'ry's fruit; the chain
And bloody whip bring punishment upon us.

For these the suff'rer in his tyrant's heart
Fixes his steel—The elements conspire

To our undoing, Ocean overwhelms,
Or hurricanes despoil the guilty lands.

Let mercy find us safety: Still aware
That 'tis the tyrant's lot to arm despair.

4 AP 54

[Exeunt Omnes.]

F I N I S.

EPILOGUE.

*L*IGHT Epilogue succeeds the Tragic Stare,
 Like quirking Voluntaries, after Prayer.
 Fashion, that dies, like Sound, as soon as born,
 Preserves, in this, her Influence and her Scorn,
 And the kind Bard, averse to break one Heart,
 Calls forth a gen'ral Grin, by punning Art.
 To-night we strive not to repress your Grief;
 Your Tears to many a Wretch will bring Relief.
 With us, no manlike Actress charms the Town,
 Or murder'd Heroine knocks the Sexton down;
 Deep has the Muse her sable Horrors spread,
 From this green Cloth—no Fiddles rouse the Dead!
 But, while obedient to the Arts we prize,
 From this Night's Scene ennobling Passions rise;
 While gen'rous Britons, touch'd with foreign War,
 Prepare for Slaw'ry the last fatal Blow;
 What Hosts of Foes prophetic Fancy sees
 Advance their chequer'd Flags of Nickanees!
 Sir Greedy, known a Connoisseur select,
 When to import the Turtle, when reject,
 Fears, should our Rulers to your Wish agree,
 He'd lose his Callipash and Callipee.
 Grave Sugar plum foresees, with waving Head,
 The royal Race extinct—in Gingerbread;
 While Bibbo stares, by higher fears o'ercome,
 And tells, with fiery Breath, the Rise of Rum.
 Ah! better far, were that portentous Waist,
 Three Inches shorter, by the Girdle, brac'd;
 Better that golden Kings and Queens should fail,
 And Bibbo's flaming Nose be fed with Ale;
 Better the Nabob's glittering Bales unfold,
 Than Liberty and Life exchang'd for Gold.
 You, whose kind Breasts at Tales of Sorrow melt,
 You, who can pity griefs you never felt,
 With Wealth, unharden'd, who can stoop to trace
 A Brother's Features in the Negro's Face;
 Commerce for you shall ope' her richest Stores,
 The hidden Wealth of yet-neglected Shores;
 And, proud to fill the heaven-directed Sail,
 Shall grateful Afric' breathe a spicy Gale.
 But other Hopes your pious Toils engage,
 That mock the Plaudits of the mimic Stage;
 Sure, that to bless the glorious Work begun,
 The sole unerring Judge shall say, **WELL DONE.**